

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T BONN 18209

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS USCINCEUR, USAREUR, USNMR SHAPE

TAGS: MILI, GW
SUBJECT: MINISTER LEBER'S REACTION TO US DEFENSE
CABINET CHANGE

REF: BONN 18086

1. DR. STUETZLE, PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO FRG DEFENSE
MINISTER LEBER, HAS TOLD US THAT MINISTER LEBER'S
REACTION TO THE DEPARTURE OF SECRETARY SCHLESINGER MUST
BE PERCEIVED AT TWO LEVELS, OFFICIAL AND PERSONAL.

2. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM THE POLITICAL
COUNSELOR ABOUT THE EXTENSIVE GERMAN PRESS REPORTS OF
THE MINISTER'S DISAPPOINTMENT OVER SECRETARY
SCHLESINGER'S DEPARTURE, STUETZLE SAID THAT ON AN
OFFICIAL BASIS THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT AND THE DEFENSE
MINISTRY WOULD NOT FEEL THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE
TO COMMENT ON INTERNAL US GOVERNMENT SHIFTS. THE
GERMAN GOVERNMENT IN GENERAL AND DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER
SPECIFICALLY HAD FULL CONFIDENCE IN THE PRESIDENT
AND IN THE US GOVERNMENT: PRESS REPORTS SHOULD NOT BE
READ TO IMPLY ANYTHING ELSE.

3. STUETZLE SAID THAT ON A PERSONAL BASIS MINISTER
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LEBER DEEPLY REGRETTED SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S

DEPARTURE BECAUSE HE HAD COME TO REGARD THE SECRETARY NOT JUST AS A COLLABORATOR BUT AS A PERSONAL FRIEND WITH WHOM HE HAD SPENT MANY DAYS AND HOURS IN WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSIONS. LEBER'S MESSAGE TO THE SECRETARY WAS AN EXPRESSION OF THAT PERSONAL REGRET.

4. STUETZLE ADDED THAT THE GERMANS HAD WARM RECOLLECTIONS OF THEIR COLLABORATION WITH SECRETARY-DESIGNATE RUMSFELD DURING THE LATTER'S TENURE AS US REPRESENTATIVE TO NATO. HE SAID THE GERMANS PARTICULARLY REMEMBERED THAT THE SECRETARY-DESIGNATE HAD VISITED BUNDESWEHR TROOPS AND INSTALLATIONS; THEY FELT THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THE GERMANS ATTACHED TO A SOUND DEFENSE OF EUROPE AS WELL AS THE GERMAN READINESS TO WORK WITH US IN CONTRIBUTING TO THAT DEFENSE. HE SAID HIS MINISTER WOULD LOOK FORWARD TO AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH MR. RUMSFELD.
HILLENBRAND

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED USCINCEUR, USAREUR, USNMR SHAPE.

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